

Invitation

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Date: 14 September 2025

Preacher: Jeremy Ross (Blythswood)

[0 : 00] Good morning everybody. Good morning. Good to see everyone, good to see a number of visitors with us as well this morning.

! If you are able to stay behind, please do so. There is tea and coffee after the service as usual. A key word to go through just before we begin. The first is to say that evening service is at 6 tonight.

I will take that service God willing. There is a time of fear at half past 5 for those who are able to make it. The YF is not going to be here tonight at half past 7 usually. There is a big YF that is storing it so there is a bus leaving here at 7 o'clock.

So the service will finish at 7 sharp so you can be encouraged to attend with the assurance of that. The few other things to say, a prayer meeting this Wednesday at half past 7, I will take that God willing.

Men's Bible study this Wednesday, this Thursday half past 7 till 9 and you have the passage details there. Friday, this Friday coming 19th of September, there is the first hospitality evening and this time it is going to be at Andrew and Renee's in Mary.

[1 : 19] So, Andrew is over there for the first time in the corner. Renee is where? Renee is at the back there, just at the window. So, if you are intending on going, please be encouraged to go. But if you are intending on going, maybe speak to them so we know that we have enough space for everybody on that night.

So, this is the first hopefully review. And the next one will be at Tiki and Anna's in Scalpy, but this one will be in Mary. Services next Sunday, Scott will take the morning service and there will be no evening service because the Scalpy communion is over the course of next weekend.

So, that will give people the opportunity to attend the evening service in Scalpy. For our own communion, just to note the dates, 3rd to the 5th of October, please note that and put that in your diary.

Two more things. I want to say thank you to those who helped and who contributed and who attended the congregational meal last night. It was good to come together and hear a little about the life suite. And we'll hear a little bit more about the life suite from Jeremy just in a little while.

The last notice is from the Kellers. I'm just going to try and read a GP's writing here, so you're with me. The McKellar and Urquhart families would like to sincerely thank all those involved in Tiki and Ross's wedding and waiting patiently along with the vibe for stranded guests to arrive from the ferry.

[2 : 53] I think the wedding has probably broken the record of the latest wedding so far, but the McKellars were always going to do that, weren't they? Thanks to Farrakhar and Anna for the music, to the elders for all their organisational help, and to the incredible Caitlin team for the amazing spread.

We can honestly say our hearts are filled with thankfulness to the Lord for this church family. And thanks to Taffy, who was in the marquee the moment it collapsed and therefore prevented it ending up in Tarency.

[4 : 0 6]

[5 : 23]

[6 : 31]

[8 : 0 7]

[illegible]

See God our shield upon the face of thine anointed dear.

We pray on as they reach out and extend their work across this world, bringing provisions to people, but bringing the gospel to you. And even in the smallest of gifts that they give, we pray that they would understand who you are.

[13 : 25] We pray that they would get a grasp of the gospel and know of Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour, Lord, we pray. We pray that they would see the love of Christ in the work that they do.

That they extend that love and felt and hand and share of the goodness that each of us have. To reach out to those who are in need, who do not have all the material comforts that we have.

We just pray that you would go with them in all they endeavour to do. That you would level the ground before them and that they would extend your kingdom.

Lord, as they go out with your message, drawing people into your house. That they may know the joy of being in that dwelling place with your people.

Lord, we pray for the charity shops. We pray for staff that is of necessity and need. We pray for believing members to consider helping in these roles.

[14 : 30] Lord, we just pray that lights, your lights, your people would be shining for you across our nation and across the world.

Lights and darkness illuminating Jesus Christ and showing it to each and everyone. We are mindful also of that man that has been taken for sharing his faith in the public square.

And we pray for the effects of that to bring fruit across our world. Lord, that we have a voice that is unashamedly standing for you.

And unashamedly professing Jesus Christ as our need in this world. Lord, we pray with joy in our hearts for Ross and Peggy and the union that has been made there in your name.

We pray your blessing over their lives. We pray that you would guide them and keep them in the years ahead. That they form a home together.

[15 : 47] Lord, we just pray that you would be with each and every one of us likewise. That we would look to you as our strength and our guide. Whether young or old.

Whether from this island or from nations far away. That we would know the blessing of being together here this morning. To hear your word. And to hear the riches of Jesus Christ.

So, Lord, speak to us, we pray. Speak to us if we are in Persian. Speak to us if we are at home. Speak to those who are listening at another time. We pray for those who cannot make it.

And we pray that you would be with them in the cities of sickness or in ill health. That you would comfort them and be near to them. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus Christ.

Your son and our savior. Amen. Amen. Amen. Okay, boys and girls.

[16 : 47] If you come to the front. I'd love to talk to you. I'm not scary. I just want to say to the rest of you, thank you for having me. I'm not going to talk too much about Blysewood this morning.

But at the end of the service, after the benediction, if you can hang around for five minutes. Hopefully, it will be four quarter past twelve. Because I've been threatened, if it isn't.

That we'll show a video of the shoeboxes this year. But I'd love you to stay. So, boys and girls, my name's Jeremy. And I wonder if you would like to come to my work to visit me.

Would you like to come to my work? Anybody got any idea if you'd like to come to my work? Well, let me show you a picture of my work. And I think you might want to come to my work.

If you can see a little bit of my work. There you go. So, if I told you I work in a shop that sells toys. Would you like to come to my work?

[17 : 45] Would you? You even sell tractors. I like playing with tractors. Dolls houses, not so much. But if you're going to come to my work, what are you going to need to bring with you?

You can come, but you'll need something if you're going to get any toys. What are you going to need? Money. So, would you give me some money? Thank you very much.

You're nice. I only have three pounds from my tooth fairy. Three pounds from your tooth fairy. Well, not the most generous tooth fairy over here, but not the worst.

Better than the 1980s, that's for sure. So, and then another question for you. Do you like going to birthday parties? Do you like it when you get an invitation to a birthday party?

What do you have to bring to birthday parties? And do presents grow on trees? Who has to pay for the presents? Do you pay for the presents?

[18 : 48] No. Who pays for the presents? Your parents. Your parents. They're nice, aren't they? So, do you think when you get a birthday party, they go, yeah, we get to spend no more than ten pounds?

Is that what they say? They're not so happy. Well, invitations. To respond to invitations, to birthday parties or to my work, you need to bring some money. It costs you.

But I've got a pillow here. I'm going to threaten to give it to the first person who falls asleep today just to embarrass them. But why have I got a pillow? If I said, would you like to have a rest?

Would you like to lay your head in the pillow and have a rest? Do you want to do that? Do you think I'm mad? Well, that's what some people think. But when Jesus gave an invitation, do you know what Jesus said?

He said, come to me, everybody who's tired and weary, and I will give you rest. So, when Jesus invites us to him, he doesn't say, come and give me all your money.

[19 : 54] He doesn't say, come and spend all your money on me. He says, come and I will give you rest. Do you like your pillows? My pillow in my bed is one of my favorite things in the world.

Because I feel safe, I can shut out all the noise, and I can just have a rest. And Jesus wants to give us rest.

So, I want you to remember that when Jesus invites you to him, he invites you to come and to rest. You don't have to come with something that makes him happy. He just says, come to me.

So, will you try and remember that? Will you? I'm not sure. But anyway, nice to talk to you. We're now going to sing a hymn. I'm sorry.

We're going to sing His Mercy is More, and we'll stand to sing this together. Let's sing together.

[21 : 00] Let's sing with you.

more sure our sins they are many his mercy is full praise the Lord his mercy is full stronger than darkness you every more our sins they are many his mercy is full patience would wait us we constantly roll what father so tender is calling us whole he welcomes the weakness the vilest the fool our sins they are many his mercy is full praise the Lord his mercy is full stronger than darkness you every more our sins they are many his mercy is more riches of kindness he lavished on us his blood was the payment his life was the cost we stood in the debt we could never afford our sins they are many his mercy is more praise the Lord his mercy is more more strong and the darkness!

his mercy more! our sins are many his mercy is more his mercy is more is more!

his mercy more strong and the darkness to everyone our sins they are many his mercy is more more well let's read together from God's word our first reading is from Isaiah chapter 55 and we'll read from verse 1 to verse 7 Isaiah chapter 55 let's read God's word come everyone who thirsts come to the waters and he who has no money come buy and eat come buy wine and milk without money and without Christ why do you spend your money for what is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food incline your ear and come to me hear that your soul may live and I will make with you an everlasting covenant my steadfast sure love for David behold

I made him a witness to the peoples a leader and commander for the peoples behold you shall call a nation that you do not know and a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the Lord your God and of the Holy One of Israel for he has glorified you seek the Lord while he may be found call upon him while he is near let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon and we'll also read from the gospel of Matthew chapter 11 the words of our Lord Jesus Christ as he speaks Matthew chapter 11 verse 25 just from verse 25 to verse 30 at that time

[25 : 57] Jesus declared I thank you father Lord of heaven and earth that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children yes father for such was your gracious will all things have been handed over to me by my father and no one knows the son except the father and no one knows the father except the son and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light and we will read too from John chapter 7 and we'll read from verse 7 and I'll read on to verse 44 verse 37

John 7 verse 37 on the last and greatest day of the feast the great day of the great day Jesus stood up and notice this word Jesus stood up and cried out if anyone is thirst if anyone thirst let him come to me and drink whoever believes in me as the scripture has said out of his heart will flow rivers of living water now this he said about the spirit whom those who believed in him were yet to receive for as yet the spirit had not been given because Jesus was not yet glorified when they heard these words some of the people said this really is the prophet others said this is the Christ but some said is the Christ to come from Galilee has not the scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of

David and comes from Bethlehem the village where David was so there was division among the people over him some of them wanted to arrest him but no one laid hands on him well may God bless his word to us as we've read it we're now going to sing from Psalm 34 we're going to sing in Gaelic and we'll stay seated for these verses but let me read them to you in English again as we're thinking about invitations today an invitation in the scriptures for us to come oh taste and see that God is good who trusts in him is blessed fear God his saints none that him fear shall be with want oppressed the lions young may hungry be and they may lack their food but they that truly seek the Lord shall not lack any good oh children hither do ye come and unto me give ear

I shall you teach to understand how ye the Lord should fear let's sing these verses to God's praise miracle miracle with the strength to show that must be moved here.

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[30 : 14] ..

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.... Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 32] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Let's turn to God in prayer for a few moments.

Our Lord and our God, we thank you that as we come to your Word, we are not just coming to a book with ink on it, with some sacred writing. We are coming to the Word of God, the Word of God that is able to come into our lives, to cut through, to make us wise to salvation, as well as to teach us everything that we need to know, that it divides what is good and what is bad.

[34 : 59] And we thank you, Lord, that in your Word as we come to it today, as we look at invitations to come to you, we thank you, O Lord, that we do not come before a God who is saying, do not come to me, but we're coming to a God that we are encouraged to taste and see that God is good, who trusts in Him is blessed. Help us then to want to come to you today. Lord, if any of us are here and we're already thinking, I don't want to come to God, we pray that you would open our hearts, that you would speak to us, and that you would draw us to yourself. Thank you that as we spread your Word, as we speak it, that you can do more with it than our voices can or anything that we might think are persuasive arguments, but that you are God who draws people to yourself, and your Word goes forth out of your mouth, and it does not return to you useless or empty, but accomplishes what you desire. And we remind you today that you do not desire that anyone should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So, Lord God, we ask that amongst us today, whether we are old, sanctified believers, we would come to you today, or whether we are young children, who hear an invitation, perhaps as if it's for the first time, we would come to you today. For us to come to you, we ask now that you would come to us. Jesus said that where two or three gather in His name,

He is there amongst them to bless them. So, be amongst us today, Lord Jesus, we pray. Help us in your name. Amen. Amen. Well, today I want to talk to you about invitations. I don't know if you've ever felt unwelcome somewhere. I went to a post office five minutes before closing with about ten minutes of work for the postmistress to do. It was in Fife. She was scary. I had to buy her chocolate at the end to say sorry, but I knew I wasn't welcome. I felt sorry for the wasp that was flying around the vestry today because David made it feel very unwelcome. Shoot it out in almost some of you as you came through the door. And some of us think that we're not welcome to God. Some of us think we're not welcome back to God. And what I want to do today is simply to say that you are welcome to God.

You are welcome to come to Jesus, and ultimately you will be welcome to come to Jesus. I just want to share with you today something about the invitations of God from God to His Son, to Himself, and to make you think. I don't want anybody leaving here today thinking, I'm not invited.

That would be what we don't want. Whether you come to Jesus or not, I can't make happen. But hopefully I can persuade you for the first time or the hundredth time that you are welcome to come to Jesus. I'd like to say He's welcome too. So first of all, you're always welcome. I don't know if I suppose a good number of you would have left Harris at some point and gone to Glasgow. And Glasgow was a new experience. I left Loch Cairn age 17 or 18, and I went to Glasgow.

And I didn't really know what had hit me with all the noise around. But one of the things that I remember in Glasgow was if you walked along Buchanan Street or Argyle Street, you would hear this noise.

[39 : 16] And for a while I didn't understand what it was. I'll try and make the noise. Not perfectly. It was, EARTHIBS! What on earth is going on here? And after a while I learned that somebody was shouting evening times. A newspaper is available for me to buy. And that was how he got my attention.

If you read the commentaries about Isaiah 55, in the old authorized version, you remember how it goes. Ho! And that ho is a loud ho. It's the ho. It's listen to me. It's the voice of the market trader saying, will you listen? He wants to get your attention. And remember when we read about Jesus in John chapter 7, he cried in a loud voice. And I want to get your attention. And God wants to get your attention to say that you are welcome to come. Come! Come! Everyone who thirsts. Who would be thirsty?

Everyone is thirsty. Everyone gets thirsty. Come, we say. And what can you get from him? You read this passage. I'm not going to go through it in great detail. What do you need to come with? Not like coming to a charity shop. Not like going to a birthday party. He who has no money, come buy and eat. You don't need to bring anything with you to satisfy that you are purchasing. Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. It is a freebie. It is the greatest freebie you'll ever be offered.

Why do you waste your time? Why are you pursuing what's going to run out? Why do you give your energy to it? Some of you are in jobs that you hate. Some of you love your jobs, but you recognize that one day your hands will get too sore to do it, and you won't have the energy to do it, and everything will run out.

Again, listen. Listen diligently to me, he says. Listen. Listen to this. You need to listen. Listen to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in food. And again, incline your ear to me. Lend me your ear. I promise not to sing you a song, but lend me your ear. Incline your ear to me and come to me. So, you're invited to come, and I'll make a promise to you, and then he tells us, seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on let you come to the Lord, that God would be filled with this compassion, this coming to you that gives you everything that you need, this sorry for you in your situation, and then what? And to our God, and what will God do? Our God will abundantly pardon. What sort of pardon will God give you?

[42 : 30] A reluctant pardon. Ah, not you. You should have known better pardon. You were brought up, and you defied me, and I'm not going to give you much. Or you lot over there, you've been against me all these years. No, there's nothing, nothing tight-fisted. He will abundantly pardon. So, what will God give you? He'll give you this abundant pardon. Now, why am I wanting you to figure this out? Because there could be somebody in here, and we get this impression sometimes, and us preachers can sometimes give it, that the Old Testament God is a harsh God. The Old Testament God is harsher than the God who appears in the person of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

And it's not true. The Old Testament God, the Father who sent His Son, is, as Isaiah says somewhere else, a just God, a fair God, a just God, and a Savior. He is a Savior, and He invites you, and He invites me to come to Him. So, why would you come to Him? Maybe some of you today are twisted arms to come to church. Maybe you're reluctant to come. Somebody will be in a bad mood with you if you don't come, or you're worried that other people might think less of you if you don't come. Something like that. You're just not really wanting to be here. And in truth, you might not really be wanting to be a friend of God. You might want to be able to live your life the way you want without anyone getting in your way. Why would a God invite you to come to Him? Why would He suddenly accept somebody like you? Well, He just would. He just would. If you, in this moment, change your mind and come to God, He will accept you. He will not make you sort out 10 years of living in sin, or 14 years of your porn habit, or whatever before you come to God. He will let you come to Him and put your trust in Him. I wonder if I turned up at the famous wedding that happened on Friday, would I have been welcome? Probably on Thursday they said, you stand there and we'll tie something to you to keep that tent from blowing away. But I don't know who Peggy and Ross are. Why would I have been welcome?

Well, I don't really think I would have been. I'm not too offended about that. I'm sure if there's another wedding, I'll be invited. But that one, no, I didn't know them. You're not invited everywhere.

You're not welcome everywhere. I had some friends I hadn't seen for years and, ah, it's lovely to see you. Call in if you're passing. We might not be at home, but call in anyway. How many times have I been to visit them, do you think? None, because it's not going to be worth it. It's not the same with God.

It's not the same with God. There's nobody in this room who, if they come to Him, will be driven away. There's nobody in this room who will come calling for God and find that He's out or asleep or not listening. Everybody is welcome. So, we move on, and we move on to the invitations of Jesus. And we're going to think of just about two of them today. We're going to think of these words in verse 28 of Matthew chapter 11, "Come to Me, all you who labor, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." And we're going to hear again the words from John 37, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." So, we're invited to come.

[46 : 46] We're invited to come to God. We are always invited to come to God. And when we come to God, out of our hearts will flow rivers of living waters. What does that mean? That means that we're going to be changed. How are we going to be changed? Now, this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

You hear the old wedding illustration of, I think it's the groom that's to walk down the aisle and remember the order, I'll alter Him. Go down the aisle, go to the altar, sing a hymn. But it's really supposed to be what she's saying, I'll alter Him, I'll change Him, because that's what women try to do to us. They don't. Maybe we need changed. But when you come and are united to Jesus, He will change you, and He needs to change you. But He will change you, and He'll change you by His Holy Spirit, and you will always be invited to Him. Don't you love our Scriptures? Don't you love it? Tired, weary, struggling Christian, not sure if you'll make it to the end, but some of the last words of Scripture, the Spirit and the bride say, come. And let the one who hears say, come. And let the one who is thirsty, come. Let the one who desires take the water of life without price. You are invited through the Scriptures. You're invited for rest. You're invited freely to come. You don't have to bring anything with you. You're invited for something that satisfies. Remember when Jesus, in John chapter 4, offered that woman at the well the water. He told her that if she took this water, it would never run out. It would be what would satisfy her. It would be this living water. Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Jesus said to her, everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of living water, welling up to eternal life. It will never run dry. What do you say to an offer like that?

Sir, give me this water, she said. So, we have all of this been offered to us. You have the Pharisees trying their hardest to please God by their efforts. You have people trying very hard to please the Pharisees by their efforts. And Jesus says, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened. Now, I guess, I guess because it's true of many of us who grew up and have grown up in religious families, sometimes religious and not always faithful families, but sometimes religion was put on us as a burden.

And Paul says that's what happens, that the law is given to us to make us aware of where we're wrong. The law doesn't necessarily keep us right. The law does help us understand where we've gone wrong.

And when we understand where we've gone wrong, it's a schoolmaster, and it sends us back so that we can put things right. And we can come and put things right, but it's hard to do, and we can't manage.

[50 : 36] If you were told, hey, live the Ten Commandments in their fullness from now on, all of us go, well, this is hard to put God first all the time, not to make an idol out of anything, not to use His name in vain, to keep His day holy, to honor our parents, not to murder or commit adultery or steal or lie or covet. It's difficult for us to do all that, isn't it? Oh, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest. I'll give you rest from your failure, and my burden will come on you, and it will make everything doable because my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. It's not about how much effort you make. It's not about competing for attention. We've got two children living with us just now, and you give attention to one of them, and the other one comes looking for attention. You go on the phone, and they both come scrambling for attention because they want to be heard. And you think, well, God, God's a bit like that with you.

Why on earth would He listen to you when He's got a holy man from over there to listen to? Why would He do it? Because He's a just God and a Savior, because He's fair in all He does.

It's not about what effort you make. It's not about what you put right. It's about what He's done to put everything right for you. So, you're welcome to come. We think of coming to Jesus to this well.

We think of going to Him for water to have our thirst quenched. I showed a video last night of a well in a slum in Navi Mumbai, a well that if I drank from, I reckon I would be in hospital for a few days. It would make me sick. The locals don't even drink it. It would do nothing good for anybody.

And you might think, as you look at the Lord Jesus and what He is asking from you, you might think that it's a bit like drinking dirty water. It's a bit like drinking something that's going to change your life and change your life negatively. Does anybody here that think, if I become a Christian, then it's not going to be good? What nonsense that is, isn't it? If you become a Christian, everything good will be given to you. It will heal your sickness, ultimately. And you can drink another prophecy from Isaiah, and just in a short song in Isaiah chapter 12, says, You're invited. Who is invited to come? Well, let's again listen to the voice of Jesus in John chapter 37. I drew your attention to it.

[54 : 03] On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out. You get a wee bit upset if a minister shouts at you. I'm not going to shout at you.

I'd love to call your attention to it again. Jesus wanted you to hear this. Jesus wants you to hear this. So, He raises His voice so that with all the hustle and bustle, you can hear this.

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And you're not sure if you're an anyone, are you? Well, let's move on one word. Whoever. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of His heart will flow rivers of living water. So, you are an anyone, and you are a whoever, and you are welcome to come to the Lord Jesus. And you might say, I can't. I can't because I'm agnostic.

I can't because I'm atheist. I can't because I'm fat. I can't because I'm thin. I can't because I've been abused. I can't because I'm an abuser. I can't because of all sorts of things. And Jesus says, anyone, anyone, if anyone is thirsty, you can come. I can't because I can't make prayer meetings. I can't because of this. I can't. No, you can come. You can come to Him. You can come to Him. And how can you come to Him? Remember John 7, 37. Go home and remember John 6, 37. All that the Father gives to me will come to me, and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. It was bold of me to say today that if any of you come, He would listen. He's not asleep. Wasn't that bold when it's what He says.

He's awake, and you're welcome to come to Him. He's willing there. Some of you might have taken your children to primary one this year or to nursery. And how does that look? Well, it looks like a teacher trying to be really friendly as this sometimes scared child comes. And the parents, is at the back, saying, not quite shoo, but on you go, on you go. It'll be okay.

[56 : 51] That's a nice picture. I've got a lovely picture in my mind. I want you to picture it. You're in the middle, and Jesus is there with His arms open, and He's willing you to come to Him. And you're going, well, how can I come? Who's pushing you from behind? All that the Father gives to me will come to me.

It's God the Father, this God of the Old Testament. He's behind in His cushion. What does He really want you to do? He wants you to go to Jesus. He wants you to go to Jesus, and He knows that His beloved Son will wrap His arms around you and welcome you to Him, that He had His arms open in the cross bearing your sin. But His arms are not tied to that cross and can now come around you and take you to Him.

Hold you, secure you. Come to me, all you who labor under heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Then you're always invited. You're always invited. Just in case you think the invitations run out. I don't know what you buy online, but if you buy something online, you have to be very careful as you check out that you tick the right box not to be bombarded with emails from that company, don't you?

Because you don't want email after email saying, you can get it. Well, with the Lord Jesus, I want to get an email every day telling me I can come to Him, and that I'm welcome to come to Him, that I'm welcome to come back to Him. If I've gone cold, and I go cold, and you go cold, and my heart becomes hard, what can I do? Where can I go? How can I fix this?

I can come to Him. I can come to Him, and I can take rest in Him and what He's done, and realize again it's not all about my efforts. If I've goofed up, I think I know in my life as I've been a Christian longer than I wasn't a Christian, I've committed bigger sins as a Christian than I ever did as a child. I've goofed up. Where can I go? I can only go to Jesus and ask for my sins to be forgiven, and I can come back to Him, and He wants to take me back. How do we know He wants to take us back? Well, what's one of my favorite, your favorite stories in the Bible? Is it not the parable of the Good Samaritan where the son, sorry, the prodigal son, where the father sees his son go away, leave everything behind, and not want anything to do with him again? And the son comes to that point where he's longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. And he came to himself, and he said, I will arise and go to my father. Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. Some of us need to say that again today. Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

[59 : 59] I'm not worthy. I am not worthy. I am not worthy. And when he was a long way off, lovely words, aren't they? When his father saw him, he was filled with compassion, and he ran to him, and he threw his arms around him. Why should I come back to Jesus? Who needs to come back to Jesus? Who needs to stop resisting this journey home and realize that you will be welcome? And Zechariah, same God of the Old Testament, returned to me, he says, and I will return to you. No, he won't. He'll leave you in the corner, and he says, you ignored me for too long, and I don't really love you because that's a lie, isn't it?

He said, return to me, and I will return to you. So, you can even return to him now by coming to him and asking him to have you back. And is he saying okay, or is he running towards you and saying yes, yes, yes, some of you are grandfathers, grandmothers, parents, and one of the nicest things in the world will be when the child sees you and runs towards you. Does it happen? Yeah, it's greatest thing.

What do you think the child sees? Grandpa coming towards me and loving them. And you see that with the eternal Father coming towards you. Well, you will always be invited. I've got some truth for you too, that if you keep running away from him, perhaps you should read the end of the book of Hebrews that tells you if you keep running away from him, then you will not be welcomed.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven?

You don't want to not come to him. I don't want to have given you, I hope, a sweet message because it is a sweet invitation. But it does have that RSVP that you should respond and you should stop this dilly-dallying. You should stop wasting your time. Why do you spend your money on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me and eat what is good. Incline your ear to me so that you might know what is right for you to receive. So, you can come to him and stop running from him and he will take your burden and he will give you that water that overflows. The Holy Spirit goes in you and that's how you're a changed person. And so, being a changed person, well, you'll just get a tiny, tiny bit and it'll be enough and you'll just struggle through this life. Is that what Jesus said? No, Jesus said, streams of living water will flow from him. Streams of living water. Is your Christianity supposed to be a dribs and drabs Christianity? No, it's supposed to be something that changes you and does everything, and so you become a different person. And you are now, as a Christian, you are able to invite other people to Jesus. If I said to you all today, I'd quite like to see Mary's face, but I'd like to invite you all to the manse for lunch. Have I got any authority to do this? No. Would you be welcome?

[64 : 11] You could test it. But I've seen what's cooking and I want to be there before you because there'll be nothing for me if you all come. I've got no right to invite you all to that house, but I have a right to invite you to come and put your trust in the Lord Jesus. I have an example in the Apostle Paul.

I implore you as an ambassador on Christ's behalf, and David does it for you week after week, and Scott does it on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Have permission to invite you to come and put your trust in God. And I know that it's worth you making the journey because whoever comes, he will never drive out. And I know that as you live your life in service for him, that one of the final things that will happen on this earth will be this. Let me read it to you from the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 25. When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate one people from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, what will he say? He said it to you already, and he says it to you again. Come, come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. You fed the hungry. You gave drink to the thirsty. You invited the stranger in. You clothed the naked person. You visited the sick and the prisoner. You did these righteous acts. Well, how could you do these righteous acts? Because when you believed in him, springs or streams of living water came from you, you were changed by the Holy Spirit. So today, I don't really know who I'm preaching to. You don't know me. What do we know about each other? I know you're invited. I know every single one of you is invited. And I know that if you come, He will never drive you away. So I implore you, on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. Let's pray.

We thank you, O Lord, for your invitation. Thank you that it doesn't depend on a post-service or an email. It comes from the living God through His living Word. And we thank you that whoever comes, you will never drive away. Pray, O Lord, that everybody who leaves here today would know that they're invited. Pray that everybody would come and that they would eventually, finally, hear, come, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world. Pray, O Lord, that nobody in here would hear Jesus say, depart from me, because they don't need to unless they refuse to come. So bring them to you, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Our final praise today is Just As I Am. I learned some years ago that this hymn, which we love to sing as a gospel invitation, is actually a communion hymn. Just As I Am, we come and remember Christ's death sometimes, but we are able to come to Him and put our trust in Him without anything.

[68 : 16] Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Let's sing this standing to praise God. Let's sing this Tammy.

And that the midst be come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

As I am and waiting not to rid my soul of want and plot, to thee whose blood can let thee stop, O Lamb of God, I come.

I come. As I am not lost about, with many a God, with many a judge, I tamed with vain and fierce without, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, O wretched fight, sight-riches healing of the night, May all I need in thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

[70 : 42] Just as I am, thou wilt deceive, with welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve, Because thy promise I believe, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, thy love and love hath broken every barrier down, Now to be thine divine, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with each one of us, both now and forevermore.

Amen. Thank you.